

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Entry of the amendment to Claim 38 is respectfully requested. The amendment to Claim 38 is supported by the Application as filed, for example in the Specification at Paragraphs 0032 and 0034, and in Figs. 1 and 2. Claims 1-16 and 28-34 and 37-38 remain in this application.

1. § 103 Rejections

The Patent Office has rejected claims 1-2, 5-11, 13-15, and 28-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xun (US Patent No. 6,287,510) in view of Lundsager (US Patent No. 4,900,698) and further in view of Gheorghiu et al. (US Patent No. 5,263,263).

The Patent Office has also rejected claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xun (US Patent No. 6,287,510), Lundsager (US Patent No. 4,900,698), and Gheorghiu et al. (US Patent No. 5,263,263) as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Weich Jr. (US Patent No. 4,717,340).

The Patent Office has also rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xun (US Patent No. 6,287,510), Lundsager (US Patent No. 4,900,698), and Gheorghiu et al. (US Patent No. 5,263,263) as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Nakajima (US Patent No. 4,731,208).

In view of the proposed amendments to the claims, the rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants reiterate, as applicable, the arguments submitted in the Amendment responding to the prior Office Action, and submit further arguments herein.

With regard to Claims 1, 31, and 37, Applicants submit that none of the cited references teaches or even suggests what *flow rate* should be used for removing oil, and in particular none of the cited references teaches or even suggests flowing a gas through a green body at a rate of 0.2 to 8 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm) per 90 cubic inches of the green body.

The Patent Office points to Gheorghiu (which refers to air velocities between about 2 m/s to 5 m/s at col. 5, lines 43-48) for a teaching of “flow rates”.

Applicants strongly disagree that “velocity” and “flow rate” are the same. Applicants note, for example, that velocity is reported in units of distance over time, e.g. “m/s”, while flow rate is reported in units of volume over time, e.g. ft³/min. A statement of velocity does not give an indication of the flow rate used. Therefore, Applicants submit that neither

Gheorghiu nor any other of the cited references teach or suggest what *flow rate* should be used for removing oil. Furthermore, Applicants submit that none of the cited art teaches *any* ranges of *flow rate*, and therefore the holdings of cases such as *In re Aller* are inapposite to the present case. In contrast to *In re Aller*, in the present case the process sought to be patented is not identical with that of the cited references: none of the references disclose even a single flow rate (for example, in scfm, and even more particularly in scfm per cubic inches of an article) for removing oil from an article.

Applicants agree with the Patent Office that Xun does not disclose the removing of a portion of the oil based component from the green honeycomb article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green honeycomb article.

The Patent Office relies on Lundsager for the disclosure that oil is removed by heating in a forced air oven at 100 °C.

Applicants submit that col. 5 lines 14-16 of Lundsager refer to heating “bars” in a forced air oven overnight (16 hours) at 100 °C. See the discussion of Examples 1-10 of Lundsager starting in col. 4 line 63 to col. 5 line 16, especially col. 4 line 67 (“pressed into bars”) and col. 5 lines 1-2 (“the bars were fired”). Applicants submit that Lundsager does not provide a teaching for removing oil from a green honeycomb article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green honeycomb article. Indeed, Lundsager does not provide a teaching for flowing a heated gas through any object. Applicants submit that the only movement of gas in the “forced air oven” of Lundsager occurred in the spaces of the oven itself, and not through the object contained therein.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Xun does not teach or suggest the removing of a portion of the oil based component from the green honeycomb article by flowing a heated gas longitudinally through the green honeycomb article, Lundsager does not teach or suggest flowing a heated gas through any object, and Gheorghiu does not teach or suggest the claimed flow rates, and therefore Applicants submit that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make a multicellular ceramic article as claimed herein. Applicants submit that the other cited references, alone or in combination, do not cure the deficiencies of Xun, Lundsager, or Gheorghiu, alone or in combination.

Applicants submit that the dependent claims are allowable for at least the above reasons.

With regard to new Claim 38, Applicants submit that the cited references do not teach or suggest, singly or in combination, flowing a gas vertically downward through the green ceramic article and controlling the temperature and the velocity of the gas sufficient to heat the green honeycomb article to remove at least a portion of a component having a flash point, followed by cooling of the green honeycomb article, and then firing the green honeycomb article. In particular, Applicants submit that Gheorghiu teaches away by providing flowing air vertically upward through the honeycomb article to remove water therefrom.

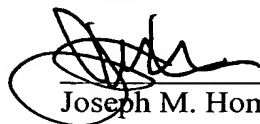
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Joseph M. Homa at 607-974-9061.

Respectfully submitted,



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